**Simple**

Bethany Bowman

You put your life on a wooden block—

let some local pastor chisel it from the inside out.

When cut by circular saw, blue and black smoke.

Now you look at the stars and see skivers,

cement sweetens your morning coffee

and that flannel, still wet from sleep

has frozen to your body. What will keep

you warm as you walk past cathedrals

and stories on the road to simplicity?

What’s so simple about a killdeer

feigning a broken wing to distract

predators, or the way light refracts

off the pond behind the old red barn?

The last shall be first, you say. To change

direction, God and science say slow down.

Tell that to the guys you punk rocked with,

smoked with, on rooftops, under clerestories.

You were a prism then. That was holy too.

I wish you hadn’t told my son his video game

was sinful, as though virtually building

a kingdom is somehow less, somehow wrong.

I wish you didn’t only play acoustic

songs about Jesus—as pretty as they are,

I miss the honesty of you screaming with a Strat.

I wish you didn’t drop out of music school

to work in a shoe factory because you were scared

of the shit we were taught as kids about Revelation.

But I’ll forgive you, accept a jar of honey

from your bees at Christmas.

It will be the best I’ve ever tasted.